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Significance of Indonesia's diplomatic relations with Nicaragua

[Summarised news item in **Kompas**, 13 April 1988]

A joint communique signed between Indonesia and Nicaragua in New York yesterday means that Indonesia is opening diplomatic relations with Nicaragua for the first time. There are no plans by either country to set up embassies. Indonesia's mambassador to the UN will represent Indonesia in Nicaragua while Indonesian representation in Managua will probably be handled by our ambassador in Tokyo.

The communique is important in relation with Indonesia's desire to extend diplomatic relations. Nicaragua is one of a number of small countries with which Indonesia has recently established diplomatic relations. Last December, it established relations with Cyprus and shortly before that. with Seychelles.

Kompas correspondent in New York, Trees Nio, reports that Indonesia has been expanding relations with African and Latin American countries. One of the main reasons is that many countries in Black Africa and Latin America support Portugal and oppose Indonesia. The issue of East Timor has convinced the Indonesian government of the importance of its relations with these continents. In the UN system, countries large and small have the same vote....

As yet Indonesia has no diplomatic relations with Angola, Mozambique and Benin which all attack Indonesia a lot on E Timor. In Central America, Indonesia at present only has relations with Panama, Costa Rica and Nicaragua, not yet with Honduras and Guatemala.

Non-aligned nomination

Besides the East Timor question, the expansion of diplomatic ties with Nicaragua and Cyprus is also related to the coming non-bloc conference. The next conference will take place in Cyprus. It is an important conference for Indonesia because a decision will be taken there about the next chairman of the non-bloc movement. All decisions are taken by consensus, with the host government playing the decisive role.

Nicaragua is particularly important because this country is competing with Indonesia for the position of chairman. Indonesia nominated itself at the non-bloc meeting in Harare in 1986, and still intends to pursue the nomination. The decision will depend on the decision reached in Cyprus. Neither Indonesia nor Nicaragua have obtained support from the Asian and Latin American groups. A factor working in Indonesia's favour is that, as a large and moderate country, it was a founder of the movement. But in Nacaragua's favour is the fact that very few Latin American countries are in the non-bloc movement and, with Cuba's support, it wont be difficult for Nicaragua to become the official nomination from Latin America. And it is also Latin America's turn to become chairman.

In relation to all these factors, the establishment of diplomatic relations with Cyprus and Nicaragua is an important diplomatic manoeuvre.